



State of Connecticut
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office ~ 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Thursday, March 3, 2016

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB-5501,
AN ACT CONCERNING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS OF PUBLIC AGENCIES

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith, and other distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities ("CHRO") **supports** House Bill No. 5501, AN ACT CONCERNING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS OF PUBLIC AGENCIES.

The privilege between an attorney and its client is paramount. A client needs to be able to speak candidly with his or her attorney so the attorney can provide the best legal advice possible. While the CHRO appreciates the objective of open government, it is vital that agencies make sound legal decisions. The law as it stands only allows state agencies from seeking confidential advice on pending litigation. This bill allows for confidential conversations for any legal matter. These private conversations will ensure that agencies make well-reasoned decisions on all the actions they take. These conversations may in fact allow agencies to avoid litigation and the time and money that go with it.

The CHRO therefore requests that the Committee **favorably report** HB-5501.